

# February Newsletter 2024



**Wu Tan Alaska**  
9900 Old Seward Hwy  
www.wutanalaska.com



Above: Sifu Krystal with her family

## Acknowledgements

**Thank you** to Katie and Nick for organizing the Chinese New Year demonstrations. Thank you to all the students who performed. It was a job well done! **Happy Chinese New Year!**

## Upcoming Events

**Chi Cultivation Class** with Sifu Jacob

Fridays 7-8pm Official start: **March 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Wu Tan Spring Potluck**

Sunday March 10<sup>th</sup>

2-3pm

**Meditation with Master Wong**

Sunday March 10<sup>th</sup>

3pm (zoom available)

**Hu Lei Jia - Sudden Thunder Style**

**36 movements – 4-day seminar**

With Sifu Kevin

March: 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>

12pm-2pm

**Cost:** \$150

**Q & A with Master Wong:** pgs. 4-9

What is Wu Tan Discipleship?



Above: Clint doing Piqua at the dress rehearsal  
Pictured left: Gloria, Monica, Padraic, Paulette

Below:

Sifu Derek and Kevin Tierney at the Potluck



**Looking back:** In January, we shared food at our monthly Wu Tan Potluck. Kevin T brought a vegetarian spaghetti, and there were lots of other tasty dishes. Early in February, Katie facilitated a dress rehearsal and the following weekend, many of our instructors and students performed at the annual Chinese New Year Celebration 2024, Year of the Dragon. Go Wu Tan!!! :)



Pictured above: Sifu Emily and Spencer at the Wu Tan Potluck





# CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL



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# Q& A with Master Wong

Question:

Some Wu Tan schools take disciples, some do not. Sifu, will you please share your thoughts on discipleship, what it means, and the value behind it?

Master Wong:

## Starting of Wu Tan Discipleship

The Wu Tan School discipleship originated from Grand Master Liu, Yun Chiao ( 劉雲樵 ).



He started this discipleship ceremony in the late 1960s. When I took the discipleship in 1974, I didn't quite understand the meaning behind it, until later day about in 1996 when I invited Master Lu, Chang Kuei ( 盧長貴 ) to teach seminars. He then explained to me about Grandmaster Liu's philosophy behind the discipleship. Subsequently he helped me to witness our first discipleship ceremony in the year of 2000 as picture indicated below.



Master Kurt Wong's disciples, 2000, Anchorage

In the beginning, I joined the Wu Tan discipleship just out of my Kung Fu curiosity for further study and research, so I didn't really pay too much attention

about the meaning of discipleship, all my focus was on Kung Fu training, nothing else. I understood then after Master Lu's help, in Grand Master Liu's heart, his philosophy was to find some dedicated students that could really carry on the torch of the Chinese traditional martial arts. And because in the past tradition that it all carried that type of message and the mission along the way. He established Wu Tan (a Martial Artist Altar) in late 1960s striving for reserving and promoting Chinese Martial Arts. A discipleship ceremony is the most appropriate way to keep those dedicated candidates for future generations.

Although Wu Tan discipleship started in late 1960s & early 1970s, but in the old days there were a lot of different other traditions particularly in Chinese culture that people would worship the ancestors, ancient masters, saint and sages. Or even in ancient Chinese painting, specialty carpentry, Confucius studies and etc.



You know, it was a tradition that students would take the vows to follow the teachers, the school, the philosophies, the concepts and ideas of the school so that they can perfect their study and art. There were traditional rituals to follow in particular Chinese culture aspect, it has been carried on for centuries. Because they believe through this process of preserving ancient arts by respecting the teachers and ancient masters would bring their wisdom in study, and eventually enlightened in the search of this fine art.

### **Sincerity and Dedication is the Key to Success**

The foundation of passing down the torch or tradition was to find students or disciples who are really sincerely adhering to the philosophy of their teacher, this was not just for Kung Fu but also for other arts. Once the disciple entered into the door, then the teachers would open their hearts to you because it was just like you were accepted and welcome as the family member into the house, and becoming a member of the art. So the teachers would show you the secret of what he learned at his discretion, and passing down the skill and wisdom to those who deemed to be true disciples by their own view. According to the ancient master's philosophy or Grand Master Liu's philosophy that a true genuine teacher can only teach a genuine student with sincerity and dedication. Without those genuine characteristics in their hearts, one shall not be able to learn the true art in the old days, especially the Chinese martial art, which was considered to be one of the highest art in demand in those era because of the time background.

## A different time era for the art

You know, the background of those eras in the old days if we rolled back hundreds of years, it was always having trouble changing dynasties and country been challenged by enemies or invaders, so need to protect your home state, protect your country and as a result the martial art skill became a very important tools for protecting people's freedom or rights in those turmoil days. But today we are protected by the laws and police officers, and as you know, we are



currently under a lot of protections by our community and country, a more civilized world.

Okay, but in the old days the world was quite different, a more primitive, dangerous, aggressive. Because people with power must feel that the more power they possessed, the more power they have control of people in those days, even though we still could feel this type of human behavior in today's world. So in those days they believed that to have a great martial art ability could really control their life better, to have the self-defense skill for yourself, providing a security for your family, community and for the country.

China has always been a country in turmoil in the past, you know, since 3,000 or earlier days, Warring States Period (770 BC – 221 BC)

( 春秋戰國 ) always had the different dynasties, changing dynasties, and people were always wanting to be a leader or warlord of the group, and they were just fighting until 1900s, and in 1911, they changed the dynasty again, so it has been very chaotic since. Actually, you know, changing the dynamic of changing dynasties because of thirst for their greed of power and control. And as a result, the ability to have a good martial art



techniques of skills became their number one priority. Simply because they had to train the soldiers and they had to train the bodyguards and they also needed to have a good martial arts

skills to survive in those time era. But as of today, it becomes an art of maybe for self-defense, but more importantly in today's reality is for improving one's health, understanding more about energy development and philosophies of Chi restoration, returning to its origin and calming the mind to see the clarity of your life through Kung Fu training.

### **Discipline and motivation of learning**

Taking the discipleship, it was like carrying on the tradition of the discipleship that would help the practitioner to plant the discipline into their hearts. This would also help them focused more by following their teacher and rules of respect.

I believe this way, students would make their personal vows to the teacher and school, you know, with the vows they can prove that they really are motivated to pursue the arts and they meant it, to dedicate and learn more about the system. By taking the discipleship means that the students are also willing to take on more challenges: such as: taking on more responsibilities, studying more in-depth of the art and eventually understand more about themselves, and have the courage of facing their own dilemma and challenges in life. The discipleship could also mean a commitment to the art and the teacher, to follow the art by not only improving their skills but also the internal stability of true personal growth in my view.



I feel the value of Discipleship of Wu Tan is that we learned the discipline of respect and sincerity, we cherish students who are dedicated to Wu Tan for all these years, a precious experience we all shared. Honestly, I learned more from my students than my teachers in the past. I learned that we all need to follow our hearts, although there are vows, rules and traditions, but overall this journey of discipleship is just a tool to make us all better.

I understand everyone changes through time, I often asked myself that 'Did I or have I helped this student to find his or her way of their direction in their practice?' Because I realized that everybody's value is different, I can only say that I follow this tradition, and I feel really good and fortunate for us in Alaska, because we have dedicated students who are still following their hearts, working toward the mission of what we originally designed for which is really precious.

As for myself, I still have Grand Master Liu ( 劉雲樵 ), Grandmaster Su, Yu Chang ( 蘇昱彰 ), Master Adam Hsu ( 徐紀 ), Master Jason Tsou ( 鄒家驥 ), Master Tony Yang ( 楊曉東 ), Master John Hum ( 譚偉素 ), Master Lu, Chang Kuei ( 盧長貴 ) and many others in my heart. You know, those teachers I enjoyed the relationship with, because they shared with me their Kung Fu without hesitation, so I can expand my Kung Fu to a different horizon in my later days. Maybe I'm becoming better or surpassed or whatever I've the level I achieved, they are still there as my teachers and Kung Fu brothers.

You know, sincerity is a sincerity. There's no bondage. Honesty is honesty there's no blockage. Okay, integrity is integrity, so one needs to seek for the truth in one's heart, but discipleship process should help the disciples to focus and move forward by following the lineage of their study. But people still need to follow their hearts of what they really want to do. I asked myself often that “Would I rectify my actions and mind by reflection from others? By taking the discipleship maybe is just a formality, you know, but more important I think a person's heart is more important, if a person's heart is rectified, if one understands, you know, understand the meaning of this process or journey, then one truly is learning the art, and it will be part of the philosophy for life. To look more inside of your practice, but not always look for outside for comparison or competition with others.



Now today, it is more important that there shouldn't have any rules, you know, shouldn't have any baggage or anything like that. We should be more open. Through my own experience for 50 years, I feel that the discipleship really helped me a lot to understand more about myself, feel more free and open about accepting others. Understanding change is imminent because everything moves and changes including people, it is normal. Simply because it is part of life and it is natural. Wu Tan was designed by Grandmaster Liu, Yun Chiao, followed and transformed by his disciples. It could be anything else, it is a learning ground or altar for reality of self-understanding and self-realization. A study of what the martial art really is, and what the true Kung Fu means.



I believe through this discipleship process, one could experience their own journey of life with a direction moving forward.



Grandmaster Su Yu Chang-Middle

From left to right:

Master Jason Tsou

Master John Hum

Master Kurt Wong

Master Tony Yang

**A teacher for a day, a father for life**

( 一日為師，終生為父 )